

1 INTERVIEW WITH NATAN SAFAR
2 HOLOCAUST ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
3 AUGUST 22, 1990
4 TRANSCRIBED BY EUGENE A. LEVINE

5 THE INTERVIEWER: Start it up. Today is August
6 22, 1990. I am ^{Gene} Jeanne Ayers, interviewing Natan Safar. At
7 the Holocaust Library and Research Center, 639 14th Avenue,
8 San Francisco. Aiding in the interview is Judy Colgan and
9 Devorah Honigstein. This is a continuation of an interview
10 begun on June 13, 1990, also at the Holocaust Center.

11 When we left you last, Mr. Safar, we were in
12 1944. The Russians were basically surrounding Budapest, and
13 I believe you were in a labor organization there in the City
14 of Budapest?

15 MR. SAFAR: When we left off is probably when I
16 wasn't already in the labor camp any more. Like I told you
17 before, we have to discharge ourselves from the labor force,
18 because Salash, he was on the -- Salash he was then already
19 horta there. Salash, she came, and the Germans told horta
20 actually, they tell him. And what it was, the labor camps,
21 they had to be diminished, would you say, so we had to go to
22 get -- how to say it -- to get out from the labor camps.

23 We were soldiers, actually, under the soldiers.
24 And then we had to go to a place and sign that we are not
25 any more in the labor force, we are free people, but we can
go only in the ghetto, nowhere else. And I wasn't already
under the army at that time. Like I was, like I told you,

1 with my cousin. What he helped me to get new papers. I had
2 Christian papers, but I had to get something else. Because
3 he said if you give us information, we will help you. So I
4 helped him already before.

5 So what he did, he made me papers from Hungarian
6 SS in rank of master Sergeant. Because we knew this is the
7 higher grade when somebody can stop you in the street. A
8 higher officer won't talk to you, even, in the Hungarian
9 army, that was. But this unit, actually I don't know, I'm
10 not sure it was any connection with the army. This was an
11 SS unit. They called them meloshes. They came out only
12 when Salash came out. That is what I am talking about, it's
13 already on the last days from the liberation.

14 So I was in this uniform walking the streets,
15 about say 28, 30 days, I had to survive somehow. I had
16 weapons, they gave me weapons. They gave me weapons. I had
17 a mauser. You load it from the bottom, a little mauser like
18 this in my pocket and I had a Russian automatic gun. I
19 don't know if you see it there. It had a round --

20 THE INTERVIEWER: Drum

21 MR. SAFAR: Drum. Like a drum. And -- well, I
22 was walking that way and I had already 3 places to go in
23 that time because those Meloshes were very weak already,
24 they see they cannot do anything. And even the door -- not
25 the door, the gate by the ghetto was open already. Nobody

1 was standing there. But Jewish people didn't go out because
2 they were scared, you know, to go out from there. Some
3 escaped, but most of them stand just inside.

4 He gave me 3 places. Places, was one of those
5 restaurants, was actually in the ghetto. But we had inside
6 already Hungarian police, regular police. We have 12
7 policemen in the shepusaw, that was the Jewish community,
8 the center of the Jewish community. We had already 12
9 Hungarian Christian police people with weapons, with
10 automatic weapons, and they will fight for the ghetto,
11 that's what they said. That was the purpose of it.

12 So I had 3 places to go to sleep and to get
13 something to eat. That was already from the underground
14 supplied for me. Well, I was still going out, the it was
15 this girl I mentioned to you that she was sick with TB and I
16 used to bring in food for her from Perbania to go out with a
17 bit of money to buy, far away and bring in. But I had
18 another family what they said if you go to the Pushonusaw,
19 that is a big street in Budapest, it's like a boulevard, and
20 you go to this and this apartment, there will be a captain,
21 a policeman and he will give you what you will ask for food,
22 food. I mean food. Because food wasn't around any more.
23 What they gave to the people to eat it was just dry
24 vegetable, 3 grams of bread a day, and that's what it was.
25 Even the Christians didn't have what to eat.

1 It was surrounded so many -- it was a couple of
2 months probably surrounded by the Russians; we couldn't get
3 out or in. So I went there and he said it's okay, don't
4 worry, just come in and here we go, here's the food, you
5 take them. But I did a couple more things like that, I
6 can't recall what I did, but I can't what it was. Usually
7 what my job was to walk in the streets, to check in what
8 kind of weapons they use against the airplanes and things
9 like that, because they used to run with those like the
10 jeeps they had with ridiculous passports, what they called
11 them. They just threw the bullets, the bullets probably
12 didn't go halfway. Well, that was in December. In
13 December. And it was going like this.

14 In January -- actually January 17th, I remember
15 like today. The Dr. Lafler that I mentioned to you, it was
16 a Dr. Lafler, a Jewish guy in the hospital, he said to me,
17 -- they called me Otto then, because I didn't want this
18 Hungarian name, I didn't want that taken. And he said to
19 me, if you have weapons, why you don't stay tonight, tonight
20 in the -- and guard in the -- what they call them -- the
21 door -- I don't know, it's a gate, you know. It's a big
22 house and it's iron gate and -- not a door, you know, a big
23 house, with iron gates. It's not -- there is no garden,
24 just a street.

25 I was standing there. About 11 in the night I

1 heard the Russians. My parents were Russian, Russian Jews.
2 And I didn't know Russian, but I knew a lot because they
3 were talking when they didn't want that the kids should
4 catch up something, so they talked Russian. But I heard
5 that but I didn't see it because we didn't had lights.
6 Everything was dark in Budapest.

7 I run in and told this Dr. Lafler, the Russians
8 are in. And he says to me, you just don't go out because
9 they are Ukranians and they are fighting with the Germans.
10 They might kill you. How they can kill me when I have a
11 Hungarian uniform on myself, it's weapons, they don't kill
12 me. So anyway if I wouldn't up go, I wouldn't see nothing,
13 you know, soldiers. I couldn't see anything. You can't
14 here any fighting, no shots, no nothing.

15 In the morning, I went up to the first -- second
16 floor and lie down on the floor and slept there all night.
17 In the morning when it start to be coming out the light, you
18 know, dawn, I watched out, you know, with one eye and I saw
19 the Russians Marines across the street from this house, the
20 corner house, it was a big school. And that was later a
21 hospital. I don't know where these people got from the
22 hospital but it was all full with Russian soldiers. So I
23 went back and I told the Dr. Lafler, the Russians are in.
24 It was just start to be day; daytime.

25 He said the same thing. I said I don't care what

1 it is. They cannot do anything to me if they don't check
2 me, but they could. Me you can check, Jewish or not. So
3 when I went out, they were laughing on me. They were a
4 part, probably 20 yards, you know, across the street. And
5 they were laughing, you know, sitting in the window, the big
6 bottles with whiskey and you know, they drink a lot. They
7 were laughing and -- come here. So I wasn't afraid already,
8 if they kill me, they kill me first and then they ask. So I
9 went there, and right away they take the weapons from me,
10 and they said who are you, in Russian, that is what I
11 understand. I said to him I am a Jew, in Russian. And he
12 says, okay, sit. They push me down there. Came up a
13 captain from the Russian army, and start to talk to me
14 Yiddish. Yiddish is my mother's language, like we say, we
15 used to talk Yiddish all the time.

16 And he says, you sure you are a Jew. I says sure
17 I am a Jew. Can you say tephillin. You know, tephillin
18 like you put in the morning. I said sure. We were
19 Orthodox. We put it every day. And I showed him how it's
20 done. Bring a siddur and he says, okay, you are a Jew.
21 Here's a paper piece of paper, just throw down the black
22 thing from you. They gave me some Rubatchka, those pants,
23 and I don't know how they call them, the coat, you know. It
24 was winter, cold time in January and a big coat, a greenish
25 coat. And he says here's this piece of paper, he signed it.

1 He can you can go anywhere from this from here to Russia,
2 nobody will bother you with this piece of paper. And it was
3 true.

4 And I left out, I had with me later, you know,
5 when I went back and picked up my things from this place and
6 I had because everywhere in the ghetto the stores were
7 looted, broken, you know, windows. So I said I take a
8 valise -- what is -- suitcase, a small suitcase, a leather
9 suitcase, pack them up and take them with me home. I have
10 to live on something.

11 Me and a friend, we said we go, we go home to
12 Satmar, you know. It was about a thousand miles -- a
13 thousand kilometers away. He was from another city. But we
14 went together, you know, up to my city, he have to go
15 anyway. And from there he went to Koloshva. When we left
16 the city, right out of the city we suddenly see on the left
17 side standing 2 Russian soldiers and a house full with
18 people, you know. And one is still with the yellow star
19 that says Jews too. What they did, they picked up, they
20 used to pick up people and send them out to Russia to the
21 labor camps. And when a soldier had guys missing he just
22 picked up somebody, he didn't care what the stars says
23 there, and they said them what it is, was a Jew and was
24 enforced, the same thing for me, he needed people. So he
25 says come here. We went there and they first, they opened

1 the suitcase and they find perfume. You know, I had
2 perfume, and they took away the perfume, nothing else. Just
3 the perfume, they took it.

4 When I took out this piece of paper and showed
5 them, he says you can go. Baslap, baslap, me and my friend.
6 We start to walk, now you know, you have to walk. It wasn't
7 a train it was bombardiered, probably from the Americans,
8 you know, the whole railroad was busted there. So we walked
9 and walked and what was there suddenly came up there are 2
10 horses, Russian soldiers sitting in one horse, and sees me
11 limping, you know. To go limping and pull this suitcase,
12 the other guy had a suitcase too. Pulled on me the belt,
13 you put the belt on it and pulled it in the snow. So he
14 says to me, so, to take a horse. I was riding horse when I
15 was a kid, you know. And I said okay, I take the horse, and
16 he laughed. But the 2 horses they were used together. And
17 somehow this horse didn't want to go where I want to go, he
18 wanted to go in the other, so I let him go. So we walked up
19 and came to a city. It was rather a case too, it was a
20 sled. You know what a sled is, probably a peasant -- how
21 you call it -- hay --

22 THE INTERVIEWER: Yes, hay.

23 MR. SAFAR: Hay. He said to us, sit on the sled
24 until I am going -- he was a Hungarian -- until I am going,
25 I take it, he didn't know, we didn't had already the bands

1 and the stars. So we went until we came to a city is --
2 what was the name of it -- Poshyon -- no, no, no. Before
3 that, before that we had another thing to go. You see, I
4 told you, the Romanian army was by Budapest surrounding it
5 like the Russians, they were together. So suddenly I see a
6 a -- totoch -- a cannon. A cannon. 2 -- not horses were
7 pulling it, ox, you call that. Like cows. They were pulling
8 it.

9 And I said to my friend we can't walk any more,
10 let's go talk to the Romanian. We were speaking Romanian
11 actually from school and everything. We went and told them
12 we are very tired, we came from that and that place, from
13 Budapest. They said sit on the cannon, we go to
14 Czechoslovakia. Until we go you can sit with us, sit on the
15 cannon. So we went and talked. Then when we came to
16 Poshyon, that is a big city in Hungary, then it was railroad
17 already, and there was a whole troop of it in the railroad
18 station, you know, probably thousands of soldiers from
19 coming back already, probably just arrived there.

20 There we had the first good meal in our lives.
21 There was a kitchen in the city which the Russians made and
22 for refugees like us, we went in and they gave us, they made
23 meat with rice, you know. We ate how much we could, but we
24 paid for it too. A couple of hours later we had the
25 stomach, we didn't eat that kind of food in a long time,

1 cooked food.

2 From there on I went home right away. I didn't
3 stay this the in the city because I was thinking maybe
4 somebody in home. It was January already and I know that in
5 Romania fell already a couple of months later our city.
6 They were 3 times fighting for it, fighting for it but it
7 fell. I came home and nothing there. The house is
8 standing. No windows, no doors, empty. Nothing there. So
9 I came home but my brother-in-law, he lives here in
10 Burlingamee, he was somehow on the other side. They pulled
11 out from Satmar to Budapest you know, away from the
12 Russians, and they were in the front, on the other side; you
13 know, with the Hungarian army fighting in Romania, inside.

14 So they already, I think in how he said it,
15 probably in November, he was already a free man. He was
16 already home. And then he said to me, you know what, your
17 sister is alive in Bucharest. I had a sister in Romania, in
18 Bucharest. And you know, in Romania wasn't almost anything,
19 they didn't deport the Jews. Your sister is in Bucharest.
20 When I heard that, I ran straight to the railroad station.
21 I didn't have the money for it, but I was standing, you
22 know. It was an express with Russian soldiers went from
23 Satmar to Bucharest, and it was a very fast train. It
24 didn't stop. No stop. Express.

25 And I picked up a place because in that time

1 people were traveling anywhere, like on the -- how they call
2 those -- where the 2 trains get together it's a dish, you
3 know, those 2 dishes when they come together. Where there
4 was sitting people. Up on the top was sitting people, you
5 know. Everywhere. And I couldn't find a place. I saw a
6 step, one step, but it's by the locomotive. is that what
7 they call him, what pulls it? The locomotive. Yes, the
8 first step. And there where I had a place to stay.

9 There where I was I think a thousand kilometers
10 until I came to Bucharest. He gave me the address where she
11 is living. I came to Bucharest in the night, 11:00 in the
12 night. I never been in Bucharest, I don't know, but he told
13 me which tramway to take from the depot. From the depot he
14 says to me, about the fourth block, that is the name from
15 the street and there she is. So that is the way I went to
16 find her there. I stayed in Bucharest. In Bucharest it
17 wasn't too bad, it wasn't too good. I don't want to tell
18 you how this meeting was, because it's very emotional. I
19 didn't see my sister probably about 15, 16 years. She is so
20 much older of the she is still alive. She is in Israel.

21 THE INTERVIEWER: Go head and tell: we will try
22 to hear it.

23 MR. SAFAR: Yes, sure.

24 THE INTERVIEWER: Sure.

25 MR. SAFAR: I have all my sisters and brothers I

1 find this way. Excuse me. I have a brother I never seen
2 him in my life and I found him in Belgium. So you ready
3 there?

4 THE INTERVIEWER: Yes.

5 MR. SAFAR: So I came to her house. It was about
6 11:30 in the night. She didn't know about nothing, you
7 know, what's happening to us. I went in, when she saw me,
8 sure she recognized me by the pictures. Not from -- she was
9 so long away from the same place. Meanwhile was changing.
10 In Romania, our place became Hungary, she couldn't come
11 home. And well, it was crying, but it wasn't too bad. Next
12 day she told me about -- she made a song, she wrote a song,
13 you know, from the Jews, how they took them from Satmar,
14 from the city. I wrote 2 songs what I have in my pocket, I
15 want you to hear it, what the Hungarian army used to March
16 much in the streets in Satmar and used to sing.

17 You have to hear this. That was their best song,
18 they sing day-by-day. And so she told me about Bucharest
19 and Dutash, I didn't know that. Places like Bucharest is
20 like Jewish quarter, all Jews, and Dutash too, and she told
21 me where this big temple is. Sure I was anxious to see. I
22 went there and I find a few boys from Satmar, a few boys my
23 age, and she said come here, we take you in in this basement
24 here and you get money. So there was a joint, the Jewish --
25 you know what a joint in Europe, still today it's a joint.

1 They gave us about 80,000 plias, Romanian money. It was
2 Romania already back. You know, Bucharest was capital.

3 Well, they give us some money and what we did
4 there, we went to find Romanian SS people. We had the right
5 to go to find, but not to do anything, just to find where
6 they live, and go back and tell the joint, and they took
7 care of everything. They picked up those people. So they
8 paid us a little money, but we gave a service for it. So I
9 was there about a month or so, and then I was saying to
10 myself, what I am doing here, I go home, probably can
11 establish something to look for my father. I knew that he
12 had Christian employees, a few, quite a few and probably
13 what he did, he gave away, you know, the hoshulas and
14 everything to to those people to hold it until after the
15 war. So I go back and I really found and I made a little
16 shop for myself and I start to work. But somehow I couldn't
17 -- I didn't have the nerve to stay there.

18 So what I did, I said to myself, I am leaving.
19 And in the meantime, 2 sisters came from Auschwitz. One
20 died here and the other one is in Burlingame. She will be
21 here I think next month, she has an interview too. And
22 well, she said, both sisters said the same thing, that
23 because I said I want to go and find my brother, I had
24 younger brother and an older brother and the parents I knew
25 I probably couldn't find because they were already in the

1 60s, so they couldn't escape anyway. I knew that. So I
2 told the 2 sisters, I am going away and I want to find -- I
3 have nothing in common here, I don't want to stay here, I
4 want to go and find my family. So what they said -- they
5 said no, no, so I had to do the same thing, not to say
6 anything and just go. I had a friend, I had a little money,
7 so what I did, I bought some cigarettes, you know,
8 cigarettes packs and we had the horses with the carriages,
9 you know, in our city, and it was only 3 kilometers Hungary
10 -- this is a border city, our city.

11 And what we did, they had this kind of rolling
12 things, you know, when they put -- it like a cover -- I
13 don't know what -- and they let them down and then we put
14 the cigarettes there. It was contraband, you know. If they
15 catch us it was trouble. But we need money, you know, we
16 want to go. I pick this up and sold it right after when I
17 went over the border, I sold it to the Hungarians there. I
18 had a little money.

19 My other friend says I'm not going. You want to
20 go, you know. I go back. So he went back. The borders,
21 they were not closed yet. You could go and come. But if
22 they catch you and something, what is illegal, they can hold
23 you. So I went up to Budapest. And first I went to this
24 girl I told you, my sister's friend, she had Christian
25 papers too. So I went to her. And I saw that they are

1 struggling too. I cannot sleep, there is no place. So I
2 went to a Jewish school. It was a big school where they put
3 beds, you know, like bunk beds that people who come home
4 have at least where to go to sleep overnight. And there
5 where I saw something I never seen in my life. A guy, I
6 will never forget him -- he must be a very heavy person in
7 life, you know, you mean in a previous life or whatever I
8 don't know to say -- must be a very big. Suddenly I see he
9 takes off the shirt and the whole thing, you know, the skin
10 so thick and hanging over, but not like hanging, you know.
11 He must be a big man.

12 And I ask him what's happened to you. He says
13 that, I was fat and the Germans what did made experiments on
14 me. You know, the hospital, they drugged him and that's
15 what happened to him. Well, next what I did, because I knew
16 I wouldn't stay here, but I didn't know how to go further,
17 you know. I said to my sisters that I had relatives in
18 Austria and probably because I knew there were all those
19 Jews from the Holocaust in Linz. You know, those things we
20 heard very fast from people coming out from their home. I
21 said I need some more money, so I went to -- like here the
22 flea market, the big flea market, and start to make business
23 with the Russian soldiers. Selling rings, you know, things
24 what was inside, 14 karat rings actually was copper, and
25 they took away from people everything, you know, in the

1 street. They ask you what is the time and take away the
2 what happens.

3 So he sold them those things, take the watches
4 back. And made pretty big money. And I said I am ready to
5 go and where I am going I don't know yet. Back I won't go.
6 What's happened there, it was forming an entire group about
7 20 people, they said we are going to Austria. All of this
8 had a leader, you know. Well, I says Austria, I want to go
9 anyway to Austria, I want to go to Linz.

10 So overnight we went and in the morning we were
11 in Austria already. And but in Austria I don't have
12 shillings, I had pengers, you know, they had to change this
13 money. But always had a little rucksack, I told them where
14 the soldiers in Hungary they had the little, the strap, I
15 always had bread in it. I was a big bread eater when I was
16 young. I said until I have a piece of bread it's okay.

17 I went and I was in Austria. It was a village.
18 And I remember that it was a very big gate and I was bumping
19 in it, I was Hungary already, later. And they didn't let me
20 in, so I saw it was a -- before the house it was a tree with
21 apples, and the fallen apples, I said well, the fallen
22 apples they won't say anything if I pick up two or three
23 apples. So this was my food. From there on the train I
24 wind up in Trafiya. I got to think. I wind up in Trafiya.
25 This was a crematorium. They burned the Jews there.

1 I came to this camp. It was a big camp. Mostly
2 Polish Jews. And I told you the truth, I didn't have
3 anything in common in these people, you know. I am a Jew,
4 they are Jews, and they will think I am not a Jew. I said
5 to myself, it was daytime and they showed me, go there and
6 took look. In Yiddish. I went and take a look and see the
7 crematorium and I said the hell, I'm not staying here for
8 one day. I went back and tell me where can I go from here.

9 They said you can go here, you can go there.
10 When I see the crematorium, the appetite is gone. I'm not
11 going to Linz, I am going to where the railway will take me.
12 So I travel, I went to the railway station and I stopped in
13 Fillosh. Fillosh is a border little city in Austria. And
14 in Fillosh it was night already and I stepped down, and
15 suddenly I hear the yelling, "Italia, "Italia. You know,
16 one train is moving out to Italy, a freight train, full with
17 wood. All kinds of wood.

18 Well, I jumped on that. It Italia, it said it
19 Italia. It's not going to Satmar, that is for sure. I will
20 find my way. I could have changed my money there. The
21 Polish Jews, they gave me shillings but I didn't get what I
22 had to get. They cheat me a little bit, you know. But I
23 had the shillings already. Well, I jumped on this train and
24 I ended up 5 o'clock in the morning in Trapisio. Trapisio
25 is the other village it's already in Italy. 5 o'clock in

1 the morning, I saw this on the top of the mountain I saw the
2 3 flags, it was American, English and Italian flag, I knew
3 it was Italy.

4 It was 5 o'clock in the morning. I stepped down
5 from the train and go out a little bit and I see a guy, you
6 know, sitting there and reading a book. Probably a student,
7 you know, Italian student. I go there because I know a bit
8 Romanian and I know the Romanian language about 80 percent
9 the same like Italian. It is. And I told him, how I could,
10 and told him is just here, you know. And he said there is a
11 Jewish house, go there. Showing a business house. And go
12 there and bang on this door, you know. And a guy came up to
13 the window and says what you want? And I said I want the
14 Israeli Brigade.

15 There was a Brigade from Israel -- it was
16 Palestine then. Was in Egypt. They enlisted in Egypt and
17 they fought in Italy, and I knew that. They fought in
18 Italy. Travasio, Woodenham, in those places, the Jews
19 fought. And he says Belgium, Belgium, they just left for
20 Belgium. And I said what am I going to do now. So I start
21 to walk. You cannot stop somebody there, you know, to take
22 you, you know, a tramp, we called them a tramp, a hitchhike,
23 you know, because you didn't know where you are and what you
24 are doing.

25 So I start to walk. Walk and walk and walk. The

1 first time I saw the American army then. The first time.
2 They were playing there, I don't know, I didn't know
3 football at all. I didn't know what football is. I thought
4 is rugby what they are playing there, they played there.
5 Well, I can't even ask them, I don't know English a word.
6 And I am walking, walking, walked through, I see on the left
7 side far away, I see a house, but it's too big. I say I am
8 going there and ask them something, maybe they will know.
9 It was a mill -- lumber, where they cut the trees -- and I
10 came there and I said I am Romano, Romano, and they thought
11 I am from Napoli. And I said Romano. and he start to talk
12 Romanian and they picked up something and said oh, and call
13 a guy from the back who was Romanian. He was married to an
14 Italian girl there. He was a real Romanian, not a Jew, a
15 Romanian.

16 And he said to me, you know what, you look tired.
17 Stay here a little bit, we give you some food. And down
18 there about 3 miles, he says, kilometers, is a big American
19 camp, military camp. You go to this camp and they will help
20 you. So that is what happened. I talked with this guy for
21 a while, and went there. Only what they did, they said
22 okay, they stopped a Jeep, military Jeep, put me on the Jeep
23 and said to those guys, where you go, he goes. So they took
24 me to the next city, Eudenai, a little city, Eudenai. At
25 Eudenai they let me down, they says go, they will know what

1 to do with you. So I didn't know myself what to do with
2 myself. You are in a strange country, you can't talk, I
3 knew I could go by talking Romanian.

4 But it came in the evening. And I said what am I
5 going to do now. Nothing to do here. Sit down; in the
6 middle of the city flows a little river, it had a little
7 bank, you know. I sit down by a little bridge, just a path,
8 you know, and sit down and fell sleep. And I sleep and
9 somebody hit me 3 times and says to me in English, who are
10 you. I don't know. I said I am a refugee. It was 2 MPs
11 from the military. It wasn't -- the police weren't working
12 yet in Italy. The army was there. And they --

13 THE INTERVIEWER: I must ask you to make it
14 clear, is the war still going on or is the war ended, I
15 believe?

16 MR. SAFAR: When I went to Satmar -- actually in
17 Germany, the capitulation?

18 THE INTERVIEWER: No, where you are in Italy. Is
19 the war over there?

20 MR. SAFAR: Wait a second. The war is over I'm
21 sure of that. Because the 7th of May, the capitulation. It
22 was later than that. Sure. The war was over. When I was
23 home the war was over, in Satmar. The capitulation. But
24 when my sisters came home, that means the war was over. And
25 they took me to a refugee camp. The MPs, and give me 10

1 liras race. I thought 10 liras was money? You know what
2 was 10 liras? Like a dime. I thought was money. They took
3 me to the camp, they gave me a cot to sleep and in the
4 morning I am going and staying in the line for breakfast
5 like the other ones.

6 I came there and says no. For me it's no
7 breakfast. I had to go to register in the office. I didn't
8 know. I never been in a situation like this. So I said the
9 hell with you, I have 10 liras, I go out and eat. Oh I am
10 coming back from the line. There standing 3 guys. It was
11 the big place, in the middle of the street it was like rusty
12 metal, beds, throw them, and 3 guys standing there,
13 Hungarian guys and talking Hungarian. I have to listen to
14 this. When I heard this, I go there, talk to those guys.
15 Say listen, I have some liras, maybe you go back to Austria,
16 give me some liras. So they changed the money. But I
17 always get cut, they also -- they were already with
18 experience. I was not. So I said if I have a little money,
19 why I have to stay here. No future here.

20 They said to me, you to go Roma. In Roma, in
21 Chinichita, that is the big place they made the movie films,
22 the movies there, before. In that time it was a huge camp
23 of Jews and not Jews. He say you go there, you will be
24 okay, a lot of Jews there, it will be okay. How to get
25 there, you know. You are on the border and you have to go

1 to Roma. That's a big distance to go. So I said I am going
2 first out and buy some food. I am going there, a guy was
3 standing there, I had a piece of bread.

4 I am going there and a guy was selling, a
5 merchant was selling fruit and all kinds of things. And I
6 show him the 10 liras, he is gives me something for the 10
7 liras. He was laughing. He says it's nothing. I want a
8 fig, you know, they had figs like this, I give him 10
9 liras, he gave me some figs. He says one, one fig for 10
10 hearings. So I said well, what I am going to do, I am going
11 so the railway station first, I am going to Roma. The
12 railway station, I didn't have a place only to sit by the
13 dishes, by those dishes. I am sitting there, I come up to
14 Bologna, yes, first was Bologna. Jump into town, go to the
15 city, start to look for the camp.

16 I find one by the railroad station. I go in the
17 camp. It comes evening, I was tired, to lie down, where can
18 I lie down, there are a lot of people there and they are
19 going up in the attic. They had high in the attic and
20 sleeping in the attic. It was a big lot. I went up and
21 stayed there but I got flies there, I never seen that much
22 flies. In the morning, I didn't know what to do. So I went
23 to the office and they told me, go there and take off
24 everything and they will DDT you, and you will take a
25 shower. I said the hell with Bologna, I'm not staying there

1 either.

2 I go to the railroad station and pick up another
3 train, goes to Verona, because the direction was Roma. Only
4 Roma I want. And the money I didn't want to spend because I
5 said maybe I spend them until I have a piece of bread when I
6 need the money to spend, then I will spend it. I sit, I
7 come to Verona -- before Verona. Suddenly the train stops.
8 Nowhere to go. Nowhere to go. No railroad. It's from the
9 American bombs everything there.

10 So was come 2 big huge trucks from the American
11 army. They already knew, probably they were used to it.
12 They picked us up and took us to a Catholic church. And a
13 Catholic priest, they had bungalows there. Round bungalows,
14 I remember. And they brought us food and we slept overnight
15 there. Next day the trucks came back, picked us up and took
16 us to another railroad place where the train was running.
17 But I couldn't go in the train, I didn't want to pay. I
18 said I am sitting here, that don't cost money. But actually
19 people think is very dangerous, but actually it's not. If
20 you are holding on to it it doesn't do anything, you are
21 sitting.

22 So I was going up, the training was going from
23 there to Napoli. I said Napoli, Napoli, I am going to
24 Napoli. But I could go on the line to Rome. I didn't know.
25 How I know that? So I am going to Napoli. There is a camp

1 there too probably. I come to Napoli, I can't find a camp.
2 I find an MP. I said MP picked me up and said come with me.
3 Took me into the office and the first difficulty I had
4 there. It was a white card like this, it says DP on it, and
5 a number, and my name. And the same I sign it, they said
6 with this you can go in Italy with a train anywhere you want
7 to go, no money. And they send me to a refugee camp, told
8 me how to go, where to go. I slept there overnight.

9 And then when the morning when I awoke, he didn't
10 had shows. They steal the shoes. I have a good pair of
11 shoes, you know. They steal my shoes and put another pair
12 of shoes, everything open, you know. I was in big trouble.
13 So I am not staying here either. I am going to Roma.

14 Then I could go already with my card. So I went
15 to the railroad station, I went to Roma. Those guys gave me
16 the address to go to Via Toscana 7, there was a joint. But
17 I went across the railroad station. So I went there. They
18 send me up to Chinichitata, a big refugee camp. They said
19 you go there, everything will be okay. You stay there.

20 Well, I stayed there for a month or so. I
21 couldn't sit one minute. I was a couple of days and was
22 enough. I just object -- you could go out and in, you were
23 a free man. So I took the tramway and went to the market.
24 And so in the market it's possible to make a buck there.
25 Then I went back and bought from those guys, the Americans

1 gave blankets, you know, all kinds of colors, pink and green
2 and blue, you know, to cover yourself up. I used to buy
3 those for almost nothing and go to the market and sell them
4 for good money because the Italians made coats for the
5 ladies, ladies coats from them. I was there about a month.
6 Then a guy came up to me and said to me, where are you from?
7 I said from Satmar. So Satmar, he says, you can go to Santa
8 Marina de Luca, and there are a lot of people from your
9 city. That was in the south. You have going about a
10 thousand kilometers in the south. This is the last place in
11 Italy. Exactly by the heel -- boot heel.

12 Well, I went there. It's real true. I had
13 about 6 of my city, the same age as me. Some of which is
14 still with me. I have one still in Israel, he is a -- in
15 the army, he is retired now. But he is a -- what is smaller
16 than a general, just a little bit smaller.

17 THE INTERVIEWER: A colonel.

18 MR. SAFAR: after colonel comes a general? He is
19 a colonel. But he is retired now. Well, we were there, and
20 like I told you, I was in this organization, the the Peta,
21 what today they call them the Likud. And --

22 THE INTERVIEWER: Is this where you joined your
23 organization

24 MR. SAFAR: No. I was reasoning it. Reasoning
25 it. I was there, but I joined the organization in Italy.

1 But I come there and see I am in the best place now. I have
2 my chevra, my people. So I enlisted to this. You cannot go
3 like in other Zionist organization. That was a refugee
4 Naturalization Service organization, not a Zionist. We are
5 fighting the English, not the Arabs. The Stern Group was
6 fighting the Arabs. Our -- well, we want out the English
7 first from Israel. That was our -- not mission -- steal --
8 in Yiddish it's steal -- probably I will remember.

9 When I was there, everything was fine. After
10 about 3 months it came to us from Chevitavekia, a Jewish guy
11 from Holland, -- Jabotinski put him in Chevitavekia in Italy
12 in marine school. He became a captain in the school. He
13 came to us down, he was a Betarist too. They put him
14 special there. He organized us to make aliya beit. What
15 means an aliya beit, illegal transportation to Palestine.
16 It was Israel. To Palestine.

17 But the problem was the English patrols, the
18 English ships -- ship or ships, I can't say this word, they
19 were always circulating, and we had to go in in the night
20 because the mother ship was inside, the Jewish people bought
21 those ships from the Italians, the Italian captains. So we
22 had to take these people out, 50, 60 people out to the
23 mother ship to go. We were in the school and it was legal
24 with the Italians concerns or Italian rules. We had Italian
25 guides. A captain, Italian captain used to come two or

1 three times a week to us. They got good money for it, don't
2 worry.

3 I was very satisfied the first time, I am going
4 to do something good, and from there I was then about 7, 8
5 months working in those big waves, you know. We didn't have
6 a motor, we had to row. Always rowing, huge boats. 20
7 people used to row it. And from there, one day we had --
8 well, the organization was really organized. You see, I
9 just knew one guy, one guy who was belonging to the -- they
10 called him Edzel in that time. He was my commander, but I
11 didn't know nobody else. Nobody else. Just him. And from
12 there they took us to another point where was about 7,000 to
13 8,000 Jews living in the tents right by the water. And we
14 were there probably no more than 4, 5 days.

15 Suddenly, my commander says to me, Natan, you and
16 the other 20, you got to flee from here because the English
17 already know about you, what you are doing, what kind of
18 work, and you have to go. I don't know where, but you have
19 to go. So what I did first, I ran back told Santa Marina de
20 Luca where we were before. There I find a guy, he said he
21 wanted to go to Paris. So with this guy I went back again
22 to Roma, to the Chinichitata, we enlisted in another -- I
23 enlisted in another name, he didn't have to. So we stayed
24 there no more than 4 days. And we went to Torino. Torino
25 is in the north. We were about three or four days in this

1 camp and then a group was forming again, we went to Paris --
2 not to Paris, to France. So we were in it. From there we
3 went to, with the taxi they took us out to -- how they call
4 this little city -- well, it's right on the border of Mento
5 in France. What's the name -- cut it out for a second.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: I have to roll it for 5 seconds.

7 MR. SAFAR: I want to tell this.

8 THE INTERVIEWER: We are ready any time you want
9 to start up. Do you know what it means in Italian?

10 MR. SAFAR: Yes, venti is 20 -- 20 miles. They
11 have miles? Enti I thought was 20. Tell me when you are
12 ready.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: Any time.

14 MR. SAFAR: It was venti millia. There we start a
15 group. Not only me, a whole group. It was a young married
16 couple with just a baby, maybe months old. She carried, he
17 carried. So we had to go up on the mountain that was
18 probably -- who knows, a thousand -- not feet, meters, and
19 down there and up and down. It was like McDonald's, an arch
20 like this. There is a border there. And on the top they
21 had thick wire like my arm. If you touch this wire, you
22 know, that was trouble, then they knew that somebody is
23 there. But this guy knew it, you know, so we didn't touched
24 it.

25 It was night of the it wasn't day, only night you

1 can go there. In the morning I remember, when were in Mento
2 -- Mento, you say -- from Mento we had to go to Paris. So
3 what we did, we stepped on a bus, all of us, and we didn't
4 know what's in the other side, you know. But we came to
5 Monte Carlo. In Monte Carlo they stopped the bus and those
6 French people, they knew every one of us. They picked up
7 everyone. You go down, you go down -- because they were
8 clothed probably differently. I don't know how they picked
9 us up, you know.

10 But one Romanian guy left on the bus. They took
11 us to the police station, not jail, to the police station.
12 We were a couple of hours there and then the police suddenly
13 say you all can go. What's happened, the Jewish guy, the
14 Romanian guy went to Nesee, went to the joint, said there
15 that and there happened. So they phoned in to let us go.
16 We went to Nice from there. And they were nice to give us
17 there hotel for everybody. So it was nice already. Some
18 money, a little bit. And we stayed there one day and from
19 there they send us out to Paris with the train. They paid
20 the train, paid everything. There was the address where to
21 go in Paris, Saint Paul is a Jewish landesman, Is a Jewish
22 landesman, the whole area is Jewish there, and there is the
23 joint. Went there.

24 They gave us a hotel, they paid the hotel. They
25 gave us coupons, you know, a book is that had coupons in it.

1 We had a restaurant, special restaurant to go to eat 3 times
2 a day, 3 meals, and they paid the hotel and they gave us
3 money. And there I was at ease already. But I still was
4 working for the Jewish, you know, this Zionist community,
5 you know. I was -- a week later I was there already.

6 But I was in Paris I had a profession in my hand.
7 I wasn't worried any more, you see. So they paid us, they
8 said we will pay until we cannot blend in in the French
9 life. But I was probably no more than about two months
10 after two months I heard this in a Hungarian house. I said
11 to her I am going there, probably I can get some information
12 where to go, start to work, do something. I can't live that
13 way. So I went there.

14 It was a guy, in shoemaking. He said well, you
15 can come and work with me; I cannot pay you too much, but it
16 will be a start. So I went. I was there 2 weeks. 2 weeks
17 later I already start to find places where to go. I found a
18 Jewish factory, they get me work. And later on I find
19 another factory, Jewish factory, I went to work and I made
20 good money already. But I got a letter from home, from
21 Satmar, from my sister, you know, your brother is alive. I
22 knew I have a brother, but I never seen him. I was about
23 three years old when he left Romania. This was Romania
24 then.

25 And I said what I am doing here in Paris, I am

1 going to my brother. So I made a passport, they had special
2 passports, you know, for strangers. I went to my brother.
3 I come there and I see on door is a sign, I am on vacation,
4 it says where, Ostend, you know. Well, all what I am going
5 to do now? I am going to go to Ostend. Well, I got to go
6 to Ostend. He is end is far away. Middle Kirk, another
7 little village there. You know where Dover in England is?
8 The train goes therefrom Belgium, it's international. So I
9 am going there. It was in the morning already. So -- but I
10 don't know him. Only from pictures, and the pictures were
11 already -- I don't know him. Probably it doesn't look like
12 him now.

13 And I found the hotel where he was and they say
14 he is on the beach now with his friend on the beach. So I
15 said -- this was about 8 o'clock in the morning. I said
16 well, I have to find him, I am here. So I went to the beach
17 straight out and stayed right there. I didn't move, you
18 know. He has to eat, you know, he has to come out some
19 time. It was about noontime when noontime when I saw 2
20 ladies a 2 gentlemen coming out from the beach. One is
21 pushing the carriage, you know. He has a child, I didn't
22 know that. When he saw me he jumped to me. I didn't
23 recognize him. It was here already a bald head a little bit
24 here. But I look like my father. He right away.

25 Well, I was staying with him there. And then I

1 went back to Paris and lived in Paris. Next year I went
2 again. This time he says to me, you are not going back, you
3 stay here in Belgium. But he wasn't -- he was a a citizen
4 -- a resident, probably, but not a citizen. After 25 years.
5 He says you are not going back, we will fight it, we will go
6 to a lawyer. After 3 months I want to a lawyer and paid
7 2,000 francs, and this was big money in that time. And I
8 got another 6 months. After 6 months they said I have to
9 go, leave. Now I can't go because I don't have the papers
10 any more. I can't go back legal to France. I wrote,
11 through another guy I wrote another letter to Paris to my
12 lawyer. He said you can't come back to francs, only legal.
13 I didn't know what to do.

14 So I went to the movie in the evening, and when I
15 come back 2 detective was standing already by the house and
16 picked me up to jail. The first jail of mine. I was in
17 jail for 4 days. I'm not used to it. I start to cry, I
18 start to do. They brought a doctor, an old man, and I told
19 him, listen, I come from the holocaust, and now why they do
20 it to me, pick me up and throw me over the border, that's
21 it. So he went back. Next morning they picked me up from
22 there and took me to Brussels, in a place they call them
23 British chateau. This was a big jail, a very big jail.
24 With criminals, with SS, all kinds of people. There you had
25 Yugoslavians SS, Hungarian SS, whatever you want was there.

1 But they were in -- in Antwerp, and the other jail, was
2 probably a maximum jail, I don't know, because if I looked
3 out a little window, I looked out in a little window I saw
4 people walking like tigers, you know. They didn't have a
5 roof, they had just bars on that. If it was raining, it was
6 raining on them.

7 They was just walking like this. I said this
8 place got to be very bad. So there it was okay, because
9 11:00 they took us out an hour to walk and there we had
10 rabbis coming in to talk to us. Jewish people came in,
11 talked to us. In my room there were 2 Jews. One from
12 Budapest and the other one with SS was from all over the
13 world. After 91 days they kicked me out again. They said
14 you have to go. Now this time I am going to my brother and
15 I want to see him, he says again I am on vacation, the same
16 thing, the same place. So I have 48 hours to leave the
17 country. It took me 12 hours to go to him and he came back
18 and he said what can we do now? We cannot do anything. Try
19 to do something yourself.

20 So I said okay, if the lawyer don't want to take
21 it, I go to Brussels, I have a good friend in Brussels. But
22 until I get to Brussels, my 48 hours is gone. I am already
23 an illegal person again. So he sent me to a little
24 tailoring shop, a room, not a shop, let's go to the joint.
25 We take a taxi and take you to the joint. He took me to the

1 joint. They take me to a basement. In the basement, what
2 you can see is weapons, you see. They were organizing
3 fighters for Israel in that time. That was already -- it
4 wasn't Israel yet. But a couple of months later it was.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: What city was that

6 MR. SAFAR: Brussels. So I had to swear by the
7 Tanach and the weapons that I am a volunteer, I am going to
8 fight for Israel. In that way they could take me out to
9 Marseilles. Again, and in Marseilles in a big camp. And
10 they gave me a -- how they call them, identity. I was Leib
11 Leach. That was not a name. They gave me another name
12 there. Why they did that, later on I heard about that, that
13 what they did, Jewish people who were living in Israel, they
14 were citizens, used to come out and somebody else used to go
15 in in his name. That's what happened in that time. But it
16 wasn't necessary because when I was in Israel already it was
17 Israel.

18 When I came, here 2 weeks, there 2 weeks, there 2
19 weeks. It took time. In Marseilles it was a big camp and
20 one evening they took us somewhere, I don't know where, Le
21 Havre, that is what I heard. They put us in a ship, a
22 freight ship, you know, in the bottom it was built like in
23 Auchwitz, you know those baths. We were lying there and I
24 think 5 days later we were in Haifa. But that was Israel
25 already, we didn't have no problem there.

1 In Israel they took us to a mabara. I don't know
2 if you know what a mabara is. It's a temporary housing.
3 Well, not houses, but it's housing. It's tents, and
4 temporarily what they said. But I stayed only 2 days. I
5 sat there, again, I have a profession, I go to work and make
6 my own. So I left, I was alone, I left. I left to Haifa.
7 Haifa in that time it was a lot of houses demolished and
8 abandoned. The Arabs run away. It was still in that time.

9 THE INTERVIEWER: What year did you arrive in
10 Israel?

11 MR. SAFAR: '48.

12 THE INTERVIEWER: '48 it was declared a nation.

13 MR. SAFAR: I think '48 like in September. The
14 nation was I think in May somewhere, right? And I picked up
15 a place to live, it was a stay. I didn't have anything,
16 just what I had on my and some little things. I left
17 everything what I had with my brother and then later he send
18 it to me in Israel. And I went to look for work. I found
19 some work. I worked about a week.

20 Later I am going to post office to mail a letter
21 to my brother and suddenly I see in the line, standing a
22 woman that is my sister. I know my family. So she was
23 buying stamps. Well, everything was -- I even didn't know
24 she was alive. I didn't know. Because she went home, you
25 know, another city, that is the sister what I -- before I

1 told you that I want to take her to Romania when I was
2 staying by her, these 2 Christian guys were living by her,
3 this same sister. And she left right away to Israel.
4 Nobody left to Israel, they left to camps and they came to
5 Israel.

6 Well, in Israel I was, like the Arabs left and
7 they left shops and everything, closed. Where she was
8 living, there was an Arab section. She told me to come to
9 live with her, she has a husband. And I went. And after
10 two or three days I told her listen, I don't want to work
11 for somebody else, why you don't make a shoemaking shop and
12 we'll sell it for the retail sales. I went down and picked
13 the lock, you know, it was a shop, you could do, you could
14 get in. It was illegal you break the lock and to go in.

15 You went to the succnut, the succnut gave you an
16 endorsement, what you call them, to get the permission, you
17 know. But we did it because we knew the succnut already.
18 Protection was so big. Everybody want to help this cousin.
19 Comes from cousins from Poland, from Russia, they want to
20 help them. They don't want to help Natan Safar, they want
21 help their own family. So I said I am going in, and they
22 throw me out, then I am going out.

23 So we made a little shop there and why I did
24 that, I remember now because my brother-in-law, he is a
25 tailor, his profession, and he had to work because he had to

1 work in the night, like night guard, you know, by factory,
2 because in that time in Israel the tailoring was so poor,
3 everybody was going with hankies, you know, like little
4 shorts. Nobody put on pants in that time. Now they do, but
5 everybody was walking like kibbutzniks.

6 He was sick, I know it. He was from the
7 Holocaust like, he was from TB. But he was a very proud
8 man, he didn't want to say to anybody. He made sick my
9 sister, you know. But he didn't say anything unless the
10 last moment, nobody knew. But I saw this is something wrong
11 with this guy and to work in the night for a dollar and a
12 half, you know, a pound and a half in that time, it's very
13 hard.

14 I was about 22, 23 years old in that time: I
15 told him, Misha, let's make something for ourselves, and
16 don't go to work in the nights. I am young, I can do it.
17 So we were working for a couple of years like that, and one
18 day I said, I don't want to stay in Haifa. For me it was
19 really hard to walking. It's a mountain, it's not like San
20 Francisco. It's a big mountain, all this walking. My
21 friend said in Tel Aviv come here, stay with us, you have to
22 live. So I left. I said to my sister, everything is
23 established, take a couple employees and run it. I am going
24 to Tel Aviv, I don't want to stay.

25 In the meantime, I met my wife there. She was

1 just about 17 years old. And we talked a couple of times.
2 Never talked about marriage or something. So I went, and in
3 the meantime she went to the army. She was in the army too.
4 But in Tel Aviv, you know, young boy, we were living there
5 and working. And later on she came and we get married. We
6 had 2 boys there. Life was normal like in Israel, you know.
7 We didn't complain, coming from where we come from isn't
8 complain. It was nothing.

9 In Israel it was nothing. You had to stay in
10 line if you want to buy a loaf of bread or a piece of fish.
11 For us it wasn't because first we were usee to it and second
12 I was in the army. When you are in the army you eat what
13 the army gives you, and it wasn't too bad. We didn't have
14 meat, we had poultry and everything was okay. Later on,
15 when my sister came to Israel a couple of times and I was
16 raised with 2 sisters, they are a little bit older than me.
17 A sister is four years older. We were 9 children. The
18 older ones were gone. They were still at home. We were
19 sisters and brothers, you know, like supposed to be. And
20 said, well, she said, why you didn't come over; come over in
21 the United States and start here, we will back you up. So
22 that is what we did. We came over here and we have a good
23 life.

24 THE INTERVIEWER: What year did you come here

25 MR. SAFAR: '66.

1 THE INTERVIEWER: When did you get in the Israeli
2 army? How long were you in it?

3 MR. SAFAR: I was about 2 years -- yes, 2 years.
4 I became a Sergeant.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: When was is that, do you
6 remember?

7 MR. SAFAR: I got married in '51 -- wait a minute
8 -- after Zvi was born in '52 -- that is hard to say those
9 things. You know why? Because in the Jewish army is not
10 like in the army. You are always a soldier until you are
11 55. I was in reserve all the time. And they called me. I
12 just heard on the radio. Flowing river; in the middle of
13 the night. I had my clothes in my locker, you know. And I
14 was already on my way and I could stop any car, anything
15 what goes and say you take me there, I got to be there, and
16 he had to. It was in '51 -- I got married -- between '52
17 and '52 when I was enlisted.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: When you went down to Tel Aviv,
19 what did you do for an occupation?

20 MR. SAFAR: My profession? Shoemaking. In Tel
21 Aviv, yes. Occupation, shoemaking, yes. I worked in
22 factories. Later on -- wait a minute -- when I got married
23 my wife was living in Haifa. I was living in Tel Aviv. So
24 she had to come to Tel Aviv living with me, right? So she
25 came to Tel Aviv and I was working in factories, but later

1 on when I had already my boys, one was 11 years old and I
2 made a factory myself. I had my own factory. I was working
3 like managers in factories and working like -- the last time
4 I had my own, it's not like in United States a factory. In
5 there you have 6, 7 people working for you, it's called a
6 factory. You see, the capital is not that big there.

7 We came here and I start to work in San
8 Francisco, and later on, about 2 years later, I bought a
9 shop for myself. In Sunnyvale and I stayed there. And now
10 I sold the shop and I have in San Carlos the Family Shoe
11 Marts. It's partners, not only me, my kids. But Samantha,
12 I forgot her. She was born in this country.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: What's your wife's name?

14 MR. SAFAR: Rachel.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: What was her maiden name

16 MR. SAFAR: Maiden name, my wife's? Moisha. You
17 heard Moisha, Moisha? Well, I have a brother-in-law is
18 Moisha Moisha. In Israel it's okay. This guy what's in
19 Israel, is Yakov, Yakov, the same. It doesn't make any
20 difference. It mostly is covering everything. Covered
21 everything. Now you ask me.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: You went over a lot of it pretty
23 fast. Let's go back to Budapest, if you don't mind.

24 MR. SAFAR: No, I don't.

25 THE INTERVIEWER: In the last days when you were

1 surrounded by the Russians, you were still in the labor
2 camp --

3 MR. SAFAR: Yes.

4 THE INTERVIEWER: About -- you were able, if I
5 recall, to go out in the city because you were a shoemaker?

6 MR. SAFAR: Not there, no. Not in Budapest, no.
7 In Satmar. In my city where I was born, there I had the
8 right to go out. But in Budapest was different. I said in
9 Choma, Choma, it's not Budapest, it's about 30 kilometers
10 from Budapest. There I had the right to go. Why they give
11 me the right? Because they couldn't stop. Shoes had to be
12 repaired and we didn't already had soldiers around us like
13 we used to have. We used to have more soldiers around us.

14 Later on, this will lieurtnant commander what
15 organized the group, what I told you, he volunteered for
16 that. He just made it that clear that he didn't need the
17 soldiers around us, put the soldiers somewhere else, we are
18 not running away, we are not missing. So we didn't have
19 them. Sergeants, we had a master Sergeant with us and one
20 soldier. That's what we had. You see, we didn't have the
21 guard. So if I want to go somewhere, I have to have legal a
22 soldier and bayonet. Like a prisoner. I was a prisoner.
23 That was in Koshber, probably what you think.

24 If I want to go out in Budapest now, in that time
25 when it was already that close to the end of the war, it was

1 everything loose. Loose. They didn't care too much. They
2 cared more to pick up a piece of bread. Even the army
3 wasn't the army any more. Like I told you, they had the
4 uniforms, and under the uniforms they had civilian clothes,
5 to throw down those things. It was almost 2 months
6 surrounded, you call, circle. Yes. Budapest they just let
7 them stay and rot. Every day you heard that, the Russians
8 used to call that; Hungarians give us, if not, you will rot
9 like the apple on the skin. That's what they used to call
10 day-by-day. I have for you something. It's a good thing I
11 didn't forgot it.

12 You see, when the Hungarians came in and the
13 soldiers used to march through the city, that was their
14 song. That was what they used to be singing, 1, 2, 3,
15 marching, always 1, 2, 3. I have a lieder for you. I won't
16 rhyme like in English. You will be surprised what the song
17 was.

18 "SS Jew. You Jew. Fooey. You lousy Jew. What
19 you searching here? You stinking lousy Jew. Under your
20 payess, the mice are crawling and your old father brings you
21 in in a back pack." But it rhymes in Hungarian. This was
22 the best song. That's one. The other one was going like
23 this. You want me to sing it for you, I will sing it.

24 THE INTERVIEWER: You can sing it?

25 MR. SAFAR: Oh, yeah, I can.

1 THE INTERVIEWER: Okay

2 MR. SAFAR:

3 (Sings in Hungarian)

4 THE INTERVIEWER: Now say the words in English
5 again.

6 MR. SAFAR: I told you --

7 THE INTERVIEWER: That is the same song.

8 MR. SAFAR: That is the song. The other song goes
9 like this. I tell it first to you in English, then I read
10 it for you.

11 'In the main street of Satmar, whistle the Jews.
12 They were whistling. And it goes 3 times. Whistle the Jew,
13 whistle the Jew, whistle the Jew. He is shouting in every
14 house, what is for sale, what is for sale, what is for sale?
15 Broken cooking pots and Russian tea metals is on Kolby's
16 wife, and Kolby's wife is sitting on top. You don't get
17 metals, rusty metals, you stinking Jew. And everything is
18 in vain. Go you stinking Jew in Palestine."

19 And that was the army. I sing them for you.
20 Just a minute. Give me a second.

21 (Sings in Hungarian)

22 MR. SAFAR: That was the song. Nice, hah? And
23 that was the army was marching. And that we had to heard
24 it, you know, 4, 5 years until we had real trouble.

25 THE INTERVIEWER: In the summer of 1944 you were

1 in Budapest --

2 MR. SAFAR: Summer of 1944, depends when.

3 THE INTERVIEWER: Sometime during the period of
4 time.

5 MR. SAFAR: We came I this, if I recall okay, we
6 came to Budapest somewhere in October.

7 THE INTERVIEWER: Of '44

8 MR. SAFAR: '44, yes. Talking about '44. '45
9 January 18 the ghetto was freed.

10 THE INTERVIEWER: Did you find when you arrived
11 there in October '44, did you find the Ghettos were filled
12 or had they already deported people?

13 MR. SAFAR: I think when we came to Budapest the
14 ghetto was just formed. Because the houses, the buildings,
15 had yellow stars on it. The Jews were concentrated already
16 in buildings and they gave them only an hour to get out to
17 buy food, 11 to 12. It just was forming. Where the ghetto
18 was, it was -- how they say it in English, I don't know --
19 it was an area. For example, 20, 30 streets. Then what
20 they done, they blocked with gates and fences that tall, you
21 know. It was so at all you couldn't go over it.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: Did you ever see the Germans
23 taking people away?

24 MR. SAFAR: Never in my life. In Hungary the
25 Germans didn't touch us. Actually, you know, I can tell you

1 the truth. All that time we decide what I saw with Germans
2 traveling through the front our city there, you know, only
3 in the vans, in the train. That's what I saw. In Hungary
4 very seldom I saw the German soldier. Very seldom. They
5 were around. Only by the SS commander it was a guard there.
6 But sole outside on the streets walking was -- even in
7 Budapest. All what they did was Hungarian.

8 THE INTERVIEWER: Did you ever see Hungarians
9 taking Jews away

10 MR. SAFAR: Just?

11 THE INTERVIEWER: Yes.

12 MR. SAFAR: Yes, I see.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: From the Ghettos?

14 MR. SAFAR: Well, I didn't see from the ghettos.
15 I heard, but I cannot tell you. What it was, I see round
16 up, bringing in Jews from the river Dona. How you call did
17 Dona -- Dona. Okay. We were working -- I probably told you
18 that, we were working on barges to -- with big boxes, heavy
19 boxes. There in the bridge, I think it's like the Golden
20 Gate Bridge, that bridge is built from them, because that
21 bridge has the same, you know, chains, made on chains. We
22 were on this side and working under the bridge, you know, by
23 the shore, and there were about probably 200 Jews lined up
24 by the river, and the Hungarian SS with semiautomatic
25 weapons, they just go through them, they all fell in the

1 water. That I saw. Another thing what's happened before
2 that, they picked up a few Chassidim, you know, what the
3 payess, and told them to put the payess, take off
4 everything. They knew they going to shoot them, why they do
5 that. They said no. What they did, they just tied them
6 together, they took gas, and light them with a match. That
7 is what I talking to my children. They listen, but I don't
8 know if this goes to the head.

9 THE INTERVIEWER: You saw them burning people?

10 MR. SAFAR: Oh, yes.

11 THE INTERVIEWER: These were Hungarians?

12 MR. SAFAR: Hungarians. I never seen a German do
13 anything to a Jew.

14 THE INTERVIEWER: How many people did they shoot
15 at the river?

16 MR. SAFAR: It was -- who knows? It was a very
17 long line. Very long line.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: Several hundred?

19 MR. SAFAR: I don't know. I just remember, you
20 know, I just remember the river, and there is standing the
21 SS standing here, which they shoot people like flies. How
22 long it was a line, I can't tell you. I can't couldn't go
23 and see. You see, up to today, sometimes I can't -- I just
24 awake in the middle of the night and go in the living room
25 and sit in my chair, and I don't close my eyes until the

1 morning. My wife, she don't know why. I don't want to say.
2 Something like this where you went through, you just can't
3 drop it. You just can't say. Otherwise I wouldn't be here.
4 I can't do that.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: In Budapest did you ever hear of
6 people, diplomats handing out citizenship papers that could
7 save people

8 MR. SAFAR: I was in that. I was in that. I was
9 in Swiss, I had a Swiss pass, I had a Red Cross worker.
10 Yes, it was. It was Swiss, it was Sweden. Sweden too. It
11 was good for 2, 3 weeks until they didn't catch down on it.

12 THE INTERVIEWER: Did you ever are hear about a
13 Swedish man named Wallenberg?

14 MR. SAFAR: No.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: Did you know of persons, Jews
16 who were taken to houses that were kept safe by these other
17 countries, these diplomats

18 MR. SAFAR: No. I just know that hundreds of Jews
19 were saved from the consels, what they gave the shuts passes
20 out. If you could safe some of my friends, they went in and
21 they refused to come out from the consulate. If they stayed
22 there, they stayed there. But how many could stay there? I
23 saw they they walked on people, the forces by the consul.
24 That I saw. They killed people, the police, just walked
25 into the house.

1 THE INTERVIEWER: You saw that?

2 MR. SAFAR: I was there. I had to get the paper
3 too to survive. I saw worst things what you think.

4 THE INTERVIEWER: Go ahead, tell about some of it.

5 MR. SAFAR: You have it already. It was in
6 Churmaga, the village where the Germans were leaving, in
7 Hungary, we called them SS, they were Germans actually.
8 Well, our company used to work there and made those ditches,
9 those big ditches against tanks. Tanks couldn't go through.
10 And is there where they brought out the Jews from Budapest
11 by foot to Lenishholo, there they stopped in the village and
12 showed us how they can kill. They just randomly shoot them
13 in the line. It was maybe hundreds, you know. They took
14 them by foot and they just shoot them the people, you know.
15 And they even didn't pick them up. We had to pick them up.

16 THE INTERVIEWER: Who were the victims?

17 MR. SAFAR: Jews. These were Jewish people.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: Your cousin from Russia --

19 MR. SAFAR: Pensch?

20 THE INTERVIEWER: What happened to him

21 MR. SAFAR: I don't know. We were not associated.
22 I told you, we were cousins from my mother's side, but we
23 were not like friends before at home, because he was always
24 a kind of rebel, you know. He used to drink, he used to --
25 what Jewish people didn't do in our place in Satmar. Nobody

1 did that. We were living a clean life, you know. But he
2 was somebody special. In Budapest I didn't have a choice.
3 Budapest when you ask me about him, I remember that when I
4 came home to Satmar, after that, I talked to guys and they
5 said you know where Hecht is?

6 Hecht was another guy who his father used to go
7 from house to house begging, you know. Asking for money.
8 He and Pensch went to Russia. Pensch married a soldier, a
9 Russian girl what was a soldier. He went with her, I don't
10 know, in Russia somewhere. Like what I heard he is a
11 captain, I don't know. He was at home too. He was a
12 communist. He went to the Shomer Atzai. That is a
13 communist organization, but left. Shomer Atzai they called
14 them at that time. I'm sure the organization is still
15 around, but we had just with lived in our city there,
16 communists that died there, some of it, that didn't left.
17 After this, yes.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: When after the war, I think, you
19 encountered the fat man who said the Germans had
20 experimented on him --

21 MR. SAFAR: Yes.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me anything about
23 that

24 MR. SAFAR: No, I just ask him and he says to me
25 they put had me in a hospital and experimented on me and

1 that is what come out. I don't know what to do about it. I
2 tell you, I never seen anything like this. The whole skin
3 folded, you know, the whole thing down.

4 THE INTERVIEWER: Was he very thin?

5 MR. SAFAR: No, he wasn't so thin. He was normal.
6 A lot of guys, a guy named Schwartz in Belgium where my
7 brother had a whole house and I was living in a studio,
8 there was a Jewish family living. They had a boy, mother
9 and son. He was about in that time about 30-something years
10 old. What what they do with this way, experimented on him.
11 He was a cripple all his life. He couldn't talk and not
12 walk, and that is what they did to him in Germany. And
13 experimented on him. That is what the mothers said. He
14 talked, you know, but you almost couldn't understand him.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: Do you know what camp he was in?

16 MR. SAFAR: I would tell you but I don't know. I
17 know my brother, I had a younger brother, 2 years younger,
18 he died in Kotowitz one day before the liberation from the
19 Russians. How I know it, a guy came on him in our city, his
20 face was frozen from the ears, the whole thing, nose,
21 everything, you couldn't recognize him any more. What
22 happened to you? He said "well, if you want to know, I am
23 telling you, your brother was with me. One day before the
24 liberation they took him out and the whole group, maybe
25 hundreds of it, through a forest in Katowitz, and they shoot

1 him. You know, they told them to make the graves, you know,
2 a big hole all the way, and they put them into the hole and
3 shot them there." And this guy full down actually didn't
4 got a bullet. And fell into the snow, fell into the snow
5 and and busted his head, what you call -- in the head, he
6 fell in with the face. He was very scared to lift his head,
7 and after a few hours later somebody lifted, it was a
8 Russian soldier lifted him up. He was frozen, the whole
9 thing. You couldn't see eyes, you couldn't see nothing.

10 THE INTERVIEWER: When you were in southern Italy
11 in the camp, Santa Maria de Luca.

12 MR. SAFAR: De Luca. De Luca is another city.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: And you were helping moving
14 Jews --

15 MR. SAFAR: In an organization what they call
16 Aitzel. Today they call them Likud.

17 You know Shamir? He is the head of the Likud.
18 And Begin. Begin was my personal friend in Italy.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: Where was that in Italy?

20 MR. SAFAR: In Italy surely. He was the master.

21 THE INTERVIEWER: Tell us about him

22 MR. SAFAR: He was a very cool man, like they say,
23 the kids here, you know. Used to run a lot, not sleeping,
24 run a lot from one camp to another, organizing, doing all
25 the time. I was even in Haifa. When I was here I was by

1 his side and he was speaking in the movie theatres, you
2 know, he was holding speeches. He was a very, very -- how
3 to say it, energetic person, and all for Israel and not for
4 this Israel, because he said Jordan never was Jordan, and
5 you know it's true. Jordan is Israel. It was Israel. We
6 just get a piece back. But that was what he was fighting.

7 THE INTERVIEWER: Was he active in this camp also
8 helping move?

9 MR. SAFAR: Active person was Schilansky. He is
10 in the Knesset. He is the guy who throw the bomb in the
11 Knesset in Israel in the basement, Schilansky, you heard
12 about him in those things nobody hearings. Well, Schilansky
13 was the -- actually the hand of Begin. He used to organize
14 everything what what happened in Israel and Palestine at
15 that time, was organized by Schilansky. Dov Schilansky, he
16 is still in the Knesset, you know, The White House. He is
17 still there. I can't recall his name, a blond guy with a
18 big mouth, I called him a bloody mouthed guy. Litvaks, they
19 are Litvaks. You know the Litvaks, Lithuanians? They are
20 good Jews, one of the best. And he was talking and talking,
21 these 2 guys, they organized the whole Italy.

22 And Begin used to go to Palestine and back. He
23 had a way to go there and come back. He was a big
24 organizer. Everybody liked him. Now the politics is
25 different, but my mind is not your mind, right? Everybody

1 thinking differently. He was thinking for his country, like
2 I am thinking for mine.

3 THE INTERVIEWER: How many people did you help out
4 to the ships?

5 MR. SAFAR: Well, I didn't count it. Every --

6 THE INTERVIEWER: How many boatloads?

7 MR. SAFAR: When we went out, we went out about 2
8 boats, 2 boats a night. But not every night. 2 boats a
9 night. We went out about 3 miles from the shore. We
10 carried about 30, 35 people, depends from the waves.
11 Sometimes less. Was a quiet night we put some more people
12 in. Was the whole trip about 15 minutes, you know. But we
13 were afraid because the patrols, they were always -- in
14 daytime we couldn't move. Couldn't move. They just came on
15 go. You know where Albania is? Well, right across, we were
16 right across Albania. This line, you always saw the English
17 there. All the time. The boats. But we did. We did. We
18 did.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the names of any
20 ships you put these people on

21 MR. SAFAR: Well, was a Paniog. A Paniog. What I
22 remember, Paniog. It wasn't ships, it was freight ships.
23 Small fishing boats, but not bigger, fishing boats. But you
24 can put 30 people, you put 70 and 80 people, like sardines.

25 THE INTERVIEWER: When you were up in Brussels and

1 in jail in Antwerp --

2 MR. SAFAR: In Antwerp, yes.

3 THE INTERVIEWER: I think you said there were SS
4 people from all over?

5 MR. SAFAR: Oh, yes, yes.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: Were they prisoners of war?

7 MR. SAFAR: I don't know. You see, we were in a
8 room. I don't know how -- like this room here, probably
9 about 3 times bigger. We didn't have a rest room, we had
10 just piles to sit on. And food was to get every day we had
11 potatoes and cauliflowers. But I had money, you see. They
12 caught me, I had 2,000 francs in my pocket. So took the
13 money from me, but I could buy stamps, and the stamps I even
14 could buy chocolate, everything. Food, everything I could
15 buy.

16 But this room I remember because the Yugoslavians
17 were speaking Hungarian, some of it. They were SS people,
18 they always used to say, you Jews, on the way we get you,
19 for me and my friend. They knew, we didn't say we are Jews.
20 We never was scared to say it. We had about 40 people in
21 the room. And then I wind up to be the head of the -- more
22 loyal than the other one. I was for four or five days.

23 THE INTERVIEWER: Were you in charge of the room?

24 MR. SAFAR: I was in charge of the room for four
25 or five days.

1 THE INTERVIEWER: Of the SS people?

2 MR. SAFAR: Yes.

3 THE INTERVIEWER: How did that feel?

4 MR. SAFAR: Well, how that feel? Until I don't
5 see them, you know, cut the heads, I don't feel. These
6 people. Just because of religion, nothing else, what they
7 had to do with us.

8 THE INTERVIEWER: They knew you were Jews?

9 MR. SAFAR: Oh, yes. They are all right to me, we
10 always said we were Jewish, to try to find out. I never was
11 scared of these people. But it was murderers too. Not in
12 the same room. Murderers was separate too. They were
13 probably in the same way in Belgium like I was. They didn't
14 left it when in the time they said get out. Something like
15 that, it happen. But Belgium didn't had camps. Italy had,
16 and Germany had and Austria, but Belgium, you didn't had
17 camps. Was jails, not camps.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: And you don't know why those SS
19 people were in jail?

20 MR. SAFAR: But they said they were SS. They
21 didn't hide it.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: Will you tell us now, name the
23 members of your family?

24 MR. SAFAR: Sure.

25 THE INTERVIEWER: Your close family your mother

1 and brother and say what happened to them.

2 MR. SAFAR: Well, my father's name is, the first
3 name is Chaim. Last name is Safar. Actually in Hungary
4 it's Shafar. My mother in law is Davidovich Rifka. I had
5 an older brother, his name was Moshe. I mention the family
6 name too, everyone?

7 THE INTERVIEWER: Just way what happened to them
8 also.

9 MR. SAFAR: Just I say the names. What Moshe, my
10 older brother, I had Amalia, it's Molly. And Regina.
11 Feigele Lenke, she is in Israel. She is still alive.
12 Ethel, she died here. And Helen, she lives in Burlingame.
13 And Avram, the last one. But beside Lenke, Ethel and
14 Regina, they were taken to Auchwitz. Regina, she had small
15 children, so she went right to the crematorium, right away.
16 And my father, mother and the youngest, my younger brother,
17 who said he doesn't want to go left, if he goes left, he
18 stays alive, he was young, he want to be with the parents.
19 So he went too. So they all died in Auchwitz. My sister
20 told me that the same day when they arrived, the same day
21 they were dead.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: How many cousins and other
23 relatives did you lose the same way

24 MR. SAFAR: I tell you, my cousins, relatives, I
25 don't know. I was born and raised in Romania. They were

1 born and raised in Czechoslovakia in Rekainco by the Russian
2 border. My father was born there. They emigrated to the
3 United States in eighteen hundred-something, 19. My father
4 was an American citizen, but he went back. Some cousins are
5 still alive in New York. But the whole family is gone. I
6 have cousins in Israel. I found 3 cousins in Israel. First
7 cousins. But their family is gone too.

8 THE INTERVIEWER: Have you asked the German
9 government for any kind of reparations

10 MR. SAFAR: Well, yes and not. In the -- I think
11 in the '50s.

12 (End of first tape.)

13 THE INTERVIEWER: It's rolling. You can pick it
14 up any time. When you were in the Israeli army, tell what
15 the medical examination discovered about you.

16 MR. SAFAR: In the Israeli army they discovered,
17 they didn't say, but they discovered something from my lung.
18 I got rid of about 3 weeks, I think every second day I went
19 and they put me on the dishes, one from front, one from the
20 back, in the hospital. I think what they did with the short
21 wave -- short wave, I think, you know.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: X-ray

23 MR. SAFAR: It's in the x-ray. They treated the
24 lung with a short wave -- you call them the focus -- well,
25 the short wave. They put me between a dish from here and a

1 dish from there, electric. And they treated. I had just
2 patches. Then the hip, they found what the hip was kicked
3 out from the place and not replaced and in the acetabulum
4 almost or coccyx, the femur head wasn't inside, it was
5 kicked out and it was 2 and a half centimeters out from the
6 place, but the ligaments and muscles they tied them so up
7 that the femur head -- not from the femur, from the -- you
8 know the femur, the head what goes inside in the coccyx in
9 the body, it was already a half rubbed off. It was missing
10 already all those years.

11 THE INTERVIEWER: How did you get this injury,
12 from the beatings?

13 MR. SAFAR: From the beatings from the master
14 Sergeant. From beating, yes.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: Does it make it kind of
16 difficult for you to walk all this time?

17 MR. SAFAR: About 2 months I couldn't walk, almost
18 nothing. I used to -- my friends used to feed me and bring
19 me something to eat.

20 THE INTERVIEWER: You use a cane now. Is that
21 still from that beating

22 MR. SAFAR: Yes. Now it's even more missing.
23 It's more missing now. But when I was younger, it wasn't
24 bothering me that much. Now is different, you know. I
25 can't walk without the cane. I can't even go to a

1 restaurant without a cane.

2 THE INTERVIEWER: Did the Israeli doctors say you
3 had had tuberculosis?

4 MR. SAFAR: No. No.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: Did they tell you what was on
6 your lung?

7 MR. SAFAR: They said that I have patches, 7
8 patches on my lung, 7 places. Actually when we came to
9 United States, on the ship they said your wife and your 2
10 kids can go down free but your husband says here. They saw
11 it on the x-ray. But after a half hour later, they said you
12 can go too. So when they let me down, we came to Mill Brae,
13 Burlingame, and I was going half -- 6 months to this
14 hospital in Burlingame too for treatments.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: Why did you come to San
16 Francisco when you came to the United States?

17 MR. SAFAR: My sister lives in Burlingame. So my
18 other sister was living in San Jose, that's why I came here.
19 Like I want to tell you, the Jewish army is divided in 4
20 qualities. They have SS Cafka tach. That means he is go
21 for the front to fight. Cafka Shatiim is the back up. They
22 they have Cafka Lamed (Speaks Hebrew), it's good to be a
23 soldier, you can use him in an office, if he is badly needed
24 you can use him in the front. But Cakfa ayen, that means
25 the soldier is good for an office, to give out clothes, for

1 warehouse, you know, those kind of -- you understand, it's
2 not that I am a soldier and they send me to the front. If
3 they see I'm not good for the front they wouldn't see me,
4 but they still need me. You know, it's like here.

5 THE INTERVIEWER: What did your wife do in the
6 army?

7 MR. SAFAR: She was a -- my wife was a -- what you
8 call it -- telephones -- communications, you know, what they
9 go to fight, she had this pack on her with the antenna.

10 THE INTERVIEWER: Where was she from?

11 MR. SAFAR: She is from Romania. From the same --
12 she is from Romania, I am from Romania, but it's still not
13 the same. In our place is Transylvania with all these
14 changes, and we speak different languages -- no, in Romania
15 we speak the same Romanian language but a but with in
16 Transylvania they speak a few languages like Hungarian,
17 Romanian, Jewish. But in Romania it's another thing, it's
18 Romanian. She is from Yossi, they are somehow different,
19 like.

20 THE INTERVIEWER: How did she spend the war?

21 MR. SAFAR: It's another thing. She was about 11
22 years old when the SS in Romania, was a time, took her
23 father out, they said something that he put a red flag, you
24 know, in a school already, that's what I heard, and he never
25 came back. And he died. They killed him. Then when she

1 was 12 years old she was going in Romania what they call the
2 kosher shara. That is kosher. You know what kosher means?
3 Kosher means it's clean. It's good. Like the meats,
4 kosher.

5 You don't know what kosher means if it's a word,
6 you can use it anywhere you want, put it anywhere. So she
7 was going to get education to go to Palestine to a kibbutz
8 or somewhere else, you know. She is 12 years old in that
9 time when she was on the way, the English catch the ship,
10 you know, and they put them in Cyprus. She was in Cyprus, a
11 child 12 years old. Then they take those children and let
12 them in, the children in Palestine. She was in Palestine
13 already in '47, in Mikra Zair. That is a school for young
14 children. They call it Mikra Zair. That was my wife's --
15 she was very young.

16 THE INTERVIEWER: Have you talked about this to
17 your children at all?

18 MR. SAFAR: Yes, sometimes. But I don't know,
19 time will do their own. I think that the -- that's my
20 thinking, that -- well, I don't want to say it, but it must
21 come out. If you don't go through it, you don't believe it.
22 They will say, well, he is exaggerating or what --

23 THE INTERVIEWER: Exaggerating.

24 MR. SAFAR: But believe me, every word is true.
25 It's not there, you have to be there, actually. You see, if

1 I would say -- if I would be a person, you know, who is
2 against Christianity, but I'm not. I'm not a bigot, I'm
3 not. You see, I told you about this guy who saved Jewish
4 people. I told you about this lieutenant commander who
5 liked Jews. You know what was his -- you know what he did
6 in the end? With 2 Jewish guys, because if he doesn't do
7 it, they shoot him in Budapest. He left the 2 Jewish guys,
8 they bought a taxi and they went straight to the front, to
9 the Russians.

10 And after the war, you know what we did, the
11 company, all the Jewish company? We made a banquet for him.
12 And he was speaking. He said I didn't save you because you
13 are Jews. It was a religious man. He said, "because I
14 believe that Jesus Christ said if somebody is in trouble,
15 you got to help him." That was his words. I was there.
16 You see, and that guy wasn't in trouble after at war. They
17 made him a big man at home and everything was okay.

18 That is was helped Jews, they really couldn't
19 advance by the Russians, even they were in the communists,
20 but the Jewish people came on him home, they took care of
21 everything. Like my master Sergeant, always yelled at us
22 and always said "you Jews, you communists,", well, they
23 caught up with him. There is a guy here in New York, he is
24 a chusid, he was a chusid before, s hasid. He has payess
25 and everything, in the restaurant. His name is Berkowitz.

1 We used to call him Bruko. He had so much guts, this guy,
2 he said, I must find this master Sergeant. He went to
3 Calonsstadt, the city, and he worked on it until he find him.
4 He found it, he brought him back to Satmar, they put him in
5 the jail, and there he went to him and said "who are you
6 now;" you know. Showed him.

7 THE INTERVIEWER: What was Berkowitz's full name?

8 MR. SAFAR: He is in Brooklyn, I know that. He
9 has a restaurant. I would like to see him. We were
10 buddies. You remember I told you we went to Colonstadt to
11 the beach and played billiards? That was the guy. He is a
12 chusid now with payess and kaftan.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: What happened to the master
14 Sergeant finally?

15 MR. SAFAR: Well, I don't want to tell you. He
16 died there. I knew that in Italy, these people can't go out
17 from there.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: Did he die a natural death?

19 MR. SAFAR: No, they beat him there, the
20 communists. Not the Jews. You see, the Christian
21 communists, they were looking for guys like him. Looking
22 for. They were looking, when they couldn't find him, so
23 somebody want to do it, they let him do it, find him, we'll
24 take care of him. I can't remember the guy's name, but I
25 remember one thing they ask him, but they ask him what's his

1 name, in the jail. When they ask him what's his name, he
2 had to stay like an SS man, up tight, and say his name.

3 And then they beat him up, because they told him,
4 you are lying, that's not your name any more. He had to say
5 Master Sergeant, you know. And then they beat him up for
6 that, they say, you are lying, you are not a master Sergeant
7 any more. And he has to go again and say something, the
8 real name. And then they put him up again. That's what he
9 told me. I never seen him, but the guys from home. Beat
10 him up again and told him, you are a liar, you are not
11 telling the truth again. Well, --

12 THE INTERVIEWER: Do you remember in the hospital
13 where the doctor said --

14 MR. SAFAR: Loeffler.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: Can you say his full name,
16 please?

17 MR. SAFAR: Loeffler.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: Do you remember his full name

19 MR. SAFAR: No. How can I remember? I probably
20 never called him by the full name. He was a doctor Loeffler
21 is like -- I think it's not like the German spelling. Just
22 simple, L O E F L E R. That was his name.

23 THE INTERVIEWER: Are you religious these days

24 MR. SAFAR: Well, I believe in religious, but I'm
25 not religious. I am a Jew. I will die a Jew. But after

1 that what I went through, not much left to believe in. Not
2 much. You see, I come from an Orthodox family and since I
3 was three years old, I didn't know nothing, only religion.
4 I was three years old -- I was 13 years old, I was the best
5 student in the chayder. In Romanian school, no. It's true.
6 I had to go over, you know, classes, end of the year,
7 repetent. but in Jewish, in Hebrew, I was the first. My
8 rabbi said, I don't know where you take it from, but you
9 know. Because every Friday my father used to hear me, you
10 see. But I learned only -- that was common then in that
11 time, the father knew too. But after that, I don't know. I
12 don't know how can happen.

13 THE INTERVIEWER: Do you watch what's happening in
14 Germany now?

15 MR. SAFAR: Yes, I watch TV, I watch the news.

16 THE INTERVIEWER: What do you think of the 2
17 Germanys getting together?s

18 MR. SAFAR: I don't want to see it.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: Why not?

20 MR. SAFAR: Once, my position is -- I don't know
21 where I am standing, but how I see it, the East Germans at
22 least didn't have this coming back, you know, they didn't
23 even teach them to kill Jews. Anybody can say anything.
24 But it was pogroms all over the world. But the Russian, the
25 Jews were better off. A lot of Jews were better. They

1 could learn, they gave them everything what they want to
2 learn. They didn't hold on by the Jew. Well, they killed,
3 sure, pogroms is pogroms, you know. Since we are in the
4 world they kill us. We kill them, you kill my Jew, I kill
5 your Jew. That's the game. But the 2 Germanys, I don't
6 think that has to happen.

7 THE INTERVIEWER: Do you have some fears about
8 what could happen?

9 MR. SAFAR: Yes, I have. I see it on the TV.
10 They are still SS, but you never know. Hitler started like
11 that with nothing. You never know. Anyway, any time, if my
12 wife says to me one word, let's go to Israel, you can't see
13 me any more in this country. It's nice, it's good, it's
14 fine. But not mine.

15 THE INTERVIEWER: You'd go back in a moment,
16 wouldn't you?

17 MR. SAFAR: Yes.

18 THE INTERVIEWER: Thank you. I am wondering if
19 Judith has any questions

20 (Pause)

21 THE INTERVIEWER: I guess that's it. It's been a
22 long haul. Nathan, is that anything else you'd like to add,
23 any final words or thoughts?

24 MR. SAFAR: No. I am not a politician, you see.
25 I said like my father said. He said, my son, they get the

1 big money, let them work it out. Anything you will say it's
2 like blowing in the wind. It doesn't -- and I see it. He
3 was right. You see, in Israel, I could do what I want to
4 do. I want to vote, I know for whom to vote. Here I don't
5 know.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: Are you a citizen?

7 MR. SAFAR: Sure I am a citizen. I didn't think
8 it was like that. You don't vote here for a President, you
9 don't vote for a candidate. You vote for electoral vote.
10 My vote, you give it away to whom you want it. You see it
11 better, he is a better man. You give it away to him. What
12 kind of voting is that?

13 In Israel I went in the voting booth, picked up
14 an aleph and put him in and this was for aleph. Picked up a
15 beit, I want Shamir, I put it in. I vote for you. I don't
16 vote for him and he will give my vote to somebody else.
17 That's voting. Well, everybody, that's why I am telling
18 you, I am not a politician. I am just a simple man and I
19 believe what my father said. I believe in that. My vote is
20 nothing. I just give it away. By me it's nothing. I am
21 only for Israel, nothing else.

22 THE INTERVIEWER: The old Israel used to have part
23 of Jordan in it.

24 MR. SAFAR: It will be. It comes to it.

25 THE INTERVIEWER: Are you in touch with Mr. Begin?

1 MR. SAFAR: No. I came here and had a letter once
2 from Schilansky to organize nice the San Francisco youth
3 organization, Likud. I was then very sick. I just got
4 diabetes in that time. I couldn't do anything. Now it's
5 too late.

6 THE INTERVIEWER: Are you still having any
7 physical problems or emotional problems too that still go
8 back to that time

9 MR. SAFAR: Oh, sure I have. Nobody knows, only
10 me. I can't watch even a film, if it's, you know, on the TV
11 set if I see a German soldier, I am out from the room. I
12 can't do it. I have diabetes. I can't get emotional. I
13 can't -- I have heart failure today. It's not those times.

14 THE INTERVIEWER: One last thought I have. How do
15 you feel about the media portrayals of the Holocaust, the
16 various movies and documentaries and television specials?
17 Do you feel that they are accurately or inaccurately --

18 MR. SAFAR: I don't watch it.

19 THE INTERVIEWER: You don't watch it

20 MR. SAFAR: No way. No way. I don't watch it. I
21 can't watch it. Last week I just opened the TV set and just
22 hit a Channel where these people standing in line naked
23 before the gas Chamber and a girl was running out naked and
24 a soldier -- I can't watch those things. You have to be
25 born for that, not went through with that and again watch

1 it. I can't do. It's impossible. Just change the Channel.
2 I can't do it.

3 (End of tape.)

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